(b) the reasons why there is a huge backlog of nearly 40 per cent yet to be completed in Tamil Nadu while more than 90 per cent conversion has already been done in other parts of the country; and

(c) who is responsible for this regional imbalance on this aspect and when this neglect and regional imbalance can be set right?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Appointment of agents for providing tickets in villages

†2862. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any provision has been made to appoint agents for providing tickets in their villages itself for the convenience of villagers travelling by trains;

(b) if so, by when this scheme would be launched and the names of railway zones where this scheme has been implemented;

(c) the rate of commission proposed to be given to the rail ticket agents; and

(d) the details of number of tickets sold and the number of agents appointed through this scheme in the South East Central Railway Zone, Bilaspur in the year 2006-07?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) With a view to improve dispensation of unreserved tickets in rural areas, a Gramin Ticket Booking Sevak (GTBS) scheme has been launched as a pilot project on East Central Railway.

(c) Gramin Ticket Booking Sevak (GTBS) are authorised to collect Rs. 0.50 per ticket from the passengers for the service provided by them.

(d) This scheme has not yet been extended to South East Central Railway.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.